

Tracy Building  
523-527 French Street  
Erie  
Erie County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5154

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

STATE Pennsylvania	COUNTY Erie	TOWN OR VICINITY Erie
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Tracy Building		HABS NO. PA-5154
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Tracy Building		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 523-527 French Street, Erie, Erie County, Pennsylvania		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1872	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Unknown	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Site was purchased in 1826 by John A. Tracy, who erected a wooden commercial and residential building that was replaced after a fire by a brick commercial structure with a mansard roof in 1872. The roof was designed to conform to an adjacent building constructed at the same time.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) American vernacular with mansard roof derived (distantly) from French Second Empire precedent.		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick-bearing walls supporting timber joists and roof framing.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) See attached sketch plan.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Cast-iron first floor, "Eastlake" details in stone lintels, corbeled brick cornice, spade-shaped slates sheathing steep mansard.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) No significant interior details remained. See sketch plan.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES None recorded.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Saloon at street level. Condition poor.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Tax records, city directories, county histories, newspapers.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION John R. Claridge, Erie County Historical Society Denys Peter Myers, Historic American Buildings Survey		DATE April 3, 1981 March 2, 1982

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Original and subsequent owners: references to the chain of title to the land upon which the structure stands are in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Erie County Court House, Erie, Penna.
- 1826 Deed, February 15, recorded in Volume B, page 511.  
Thomas Forster, Jr. to John A. Tracy. 49' front by 134' depth.
- 1861 Deed, January 16, 1861, recorded in Volume 57, page 299.  
John A. Tracy to Charles Tracy. 19.33' front.  
  
Deed, January 16, 1861, recorded in Volume 57, page 298.  
John A. Tracy to Eliza Tracy Griswold. 19.33' front.
- 1875 Will, February 27, 1875, recorded in Volume E, page 534.  
John A. Tracy to William A. Tracy. 19.33 ' front.
- 1877 Deed, April 4, 1877, recorded in Volume 59, page 465.  
Charles Tracy to Mary M. Scott.
- 1887, Deed, June 20, 1887, recorded in Volume 100, page 334.  
Mary M. Scott to William A. Tracy.
- 1904 Will, October 11, 1904, recorded in Volume P, page 69.  
William A. Tracy to Annie Tracy Beers in trust for Daniel Tracy Beers.
- 1910 Deed, March 7, 1910, recorded in Volume 176, page 569.  
William B. Walling to Richard P. McKay by public sale on behalf of trustees and heirs.
- 1911 Deed, January 17, 1911, recorded in Volume 182, page 70.  
Eliza Tracy Griswold to J.R. Craig.
- 1911 Deed, April 1, 1911, recorded in Volume 184, page 415.  
J.R. Craig to C.B. Hayes.
- 1911 Deed, Spetember 20, 1911, recorded in Volume 186, page 142.  
C.B. Hayes to Emma Lomis.
- 1913 Deed, February 25, 1913, recorded in Volume 195, page 631.  
Richard P. McKay to D.O. Hopkins.
- 1913 Deed, May 29, 1913, recorded in Volume 195, page 631.  
D.O. Hopkins to William Fischer.
- 1915 Deed, October 8, 1915, recorded in Volume 215, page 236.  
William Fischer to Anne Conway Althof.

- 1916 Deed, November 2, 1916, recorded in Volume 217, page 735.  
Emma Lomis to Ralph Hopwood.
- 1917 Deed, March 5, 1917, recorded in Volume 223, page 620.  
Ralph Hopwood to Joseph F. Rossi.
- 1917 Deed, November 19, 1917, recorded in Volume 226, page 251.  
Joseph F. Rossi to Joseph J. Scheiwer.
- 1925 Deed, July 23, 1925, recorded in Volume 299, page 77.  
Annie Tracy Beers to Daniel Tracy Beers.
- 1927 Deed, June 29, 1927, recorded in Volume 313, page 295.  
Joseph J. Scheiwer to P.A. Goodnough.
- 1933 Deed, November 8, 1933, recorded in Volume 386, page 227.  
P.A. Goodnough to J.G. Saint and L.A. Wells by sheriff  
sale.
- 1940 Deed, October 26, 1940, recorded in Volume 401, page 424.  
J.G. Saint and L.A. Wells to Erie Trust Company.
- 1941 Deed, January 30, 1941, recorded in Volume 407, page 171.  
Erie Trust Company to Gerard P. O'Connor.
- 1942 Will, March 20, 1942, recorded in Volume 12, page 316.  
Anne C. Althof to Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co.
- 1944 Deed, January 3, 1944, recorded in Volume 443, page 316.  
Daniel Tracy Beers to Clyde J. Boeringer.
- Deed, November 4, 1944, recorded in Volume 451, page 495.  
Gerard P. O'Connor to C. Guerrin and Joseph Gold.
- 1946 Deed, September 23, 1946, recorded in Volume 395, page 95.  
Clyde J. Boeringer to John A. Spaeder by sheriff sale.
- Deed, October 11, 1946, recorded in Volume 530, page 491.  
Samuel J. Roberts (master in partition) to Carl Guerrin.
- Deed, October 10, 1946, recorded in Volume 483, page 586.  
John A. Spaeder to Lawrence Behan.
- October 12, 1946, recorded in Volume 544, page 248.  
Lawrence Behan to Richard G. Power.
- 1949 Deed, September 9, 1949, recorded in Volume 550, page 305.  
Richard G. Power to Lakes Electric Construction Company.
- 1952 Deed, July 2, 1952, recorded in Volume 664, page 333.  
Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company to Andrea Marcopolous.

1967 Will, February 11, 1967, recorded in Volume 45, page 539.  
Andrea Marcopolous to George Marcopolous.

Deed, November 11, 1967, recorded in Volume 961, page 248.  
George Marcopolous to George and Fannie Marcopolous.

1972 Deed, August 8, 1972, recorded in Volume 1075, page 334.  
Lakes Electric Construction Company to Peter C. Schaaf.

## 2. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure

John A. Tracy came to Waterford, Erie County in 1801. At age 18 he moved to Erie and clerked in a store at the southwest corner of Sixth and French streets. He later entered a partnership with Jonas Harrison in a general mercantile business.

In 1826 Tracy acquired property on French Street where he established a store and his residence. As Erie's commercial heart moved south from the waterfront in the first half of the nineteenth century, this section of French Street bordering on the Park, developed into a principal retail center. Moreover it so earned a reputation for low prices, that it was called "Cheapside" after the historic district in London. During the Middle Ages, that area was known as the Chepe (from the Anglo-Saxon word ceap, meaning "sale" or "bargain"), and was an open square where markets or fairs were held.

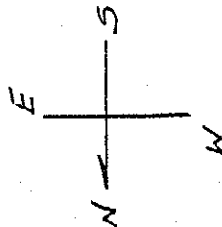
Erie's "Cheapside" reached its height of popularity during the mid-century decades as the population of the city expanded rapidly and commerce prospered. The greatest building activity at the time occurred on the periphery of the Park whose many wooden structures were replaced by brick blocks, following an ordinance in the early 1860's which required new downtown commercial buildings to be constructed of that material.

Tracy's building was damaged by fire on several occasions, and in 1872 he replaced it with a brick building and added a mansard roof to conform to another commercial building that was being erected immediately to the south.

By the end of the nineteenth century, "Cheapside" had been largely replaced by newer stores south of the Park. Whereas its buildings had once housed some of the leading merchants and offices of professional, they now contained saloons, boarding rooms, and various marginal enterprises. Tracy's Building at one time had listed the hat shop of Sherburne Smith, a mayor of the city.

While what remains of "Cheapside" will be shortly demolished, measures are being made to salvage the more outstanding architectural elements on the building facades.

BUSINESS BLOCK #2 (CHEAPSIDE)  
FRENCH STREET FROM FIFTH TO SIXTH (EASTSIDE)



↑ = PHOTOGRAPH NUMBER &  
DIRECTION OF VIEW

TYPICAL UPPER FLOOR SHOWN AT 523

ONLY THIS BUILDING IS  
DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR  
INCLUSION ON THE N.R.

